They are the building blocks for all software, from the simplest applications to the most sophisticated ones.  
The purpose of programming is to find a sequence of instructions that will automate the performance of a task (which can be as complex as an operating system) on a computer, often for solving a given problem.  
Programming languages are essential for software development.  
By the late 1960s, data storage devices and computer terminals became inexpensive enough that programs could be created by typing directly into the computers.  
Expert programmers are familiar with a variety of well-established algorithms and their respective complexities and use this knowledge to choose algorithms that are best suited to the circumstances.  
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Relatedly, software engineering combines engineering techniques and principles with software development.  
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Techniques like Code refactoring can enhance readability.  
Normally the first step in debugging is to attempt to reproduce the problem.  
 Readability is important because programmers spend the majority of their time reading, trying to understand, reusing and modifying existing source code, rather than writing new source code.  
There exist a lot of different approaches for each of those tasks.  
 New languages are generally designed around the syntax of a prior language with new functionality added, (for example C++ adds object-orientation to C, and Java adds memory management and bytecode to C++, but as a result, loses efficiency and the ability for low-level manipulation).  
There are many approaches to the Software development process.  
There exist a lot of different approaches for each of those tasks.